

Welcome

Gene Vaughn Master of Ceremonies

"Happiness"

Charles Shutt Narrator

Up and Comers Swing Choir Mrs. Laverne Roberts, Director

Slide-Tape Show

Figo County Public Library Vigo County Historical Society

"Terre Haute"

David Kirk Narrator

Honey Creek Jr. High School Choir Mrs. Erma Jacobson, Director

Community Theatre Readers Theatre

selections from "The Bank Robbers" and "Light of the Sun"

readers: Barbara White
Jayne Lloyd
Charles Shutt
Greg Ragle

Katie Walker John Haney

"Love Someone"

Ralph Tucker

Schulte High School Choral Group Miss Srilda DeMougin, Director

"The Myth of Desiderata"

Mr. Robert Bell

"Desiderata"

Charles Shutt Soloist

Terre Haute South Vigo High School Show Choir Vera Wright, Director "A Prayer"

Ralph Tucker Narrator

Terre Haute North Vigo High School Counter Points Rex Wagner, Director

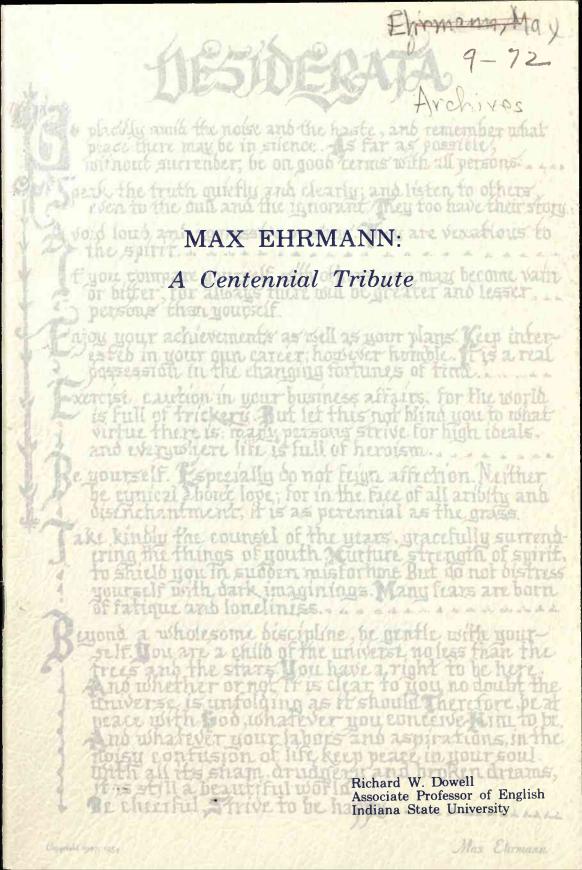
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MAX EHRMANN: A Centennial Tribute



MAX EHRMANN SEPTEMBER 26, 1872-SEPTEMBER 9, 1945

Richard W. Dowell Associate Professor of English Indiana State University Terre Haute

What place is lovelier than Terre Haute: The foliage of her many trees, That trembles as the cooling breezes float Across the grain fields' yellow seas?

The gentle river that caressing sings Past shop and mill and waving corn, Each day some happy inspiration brings; Each day a thousand hopes are born.

Here workers wend their way to pleasant homes; And students spend romantic days. Here lofty spires and gilded domes Reach up to touch the sun's first rays.

Here many a youth and maid their faith have kept, Labored, lived happily, grown gray. Here bolder ones with keener eyes have crept To paths where fame and fortune lay.

Vast growing fields and treasures in the ground, Art, learning, too, here find abode; And many a forward-looking son has found The gifts that gods have here bestowed.

What various aspirations man pursues! It matters not what visions lure, Here may ambition all its talents use; Here is the world in miniature.

Poet and philosopher Henry David Thoreau, when explaining the experiences that had given birth to his universal themes, wrote simply: "I have travelled a good deal in Concord." A similar statement about Terre Haute could have been made by poet, playwright, philosopher Max Ehrmann, who viewed his "native city" as "the world in miniature." It provided the raw materials and the inspiration for most of his twenty-two books and pamphlets and the many poems and essays published separately in newspapers and magazines. Unlike his Terre Haute-born contemporaries Paul Dresser and Theodore Dreiser, Ehrmann did not abandon his midwestern environment for the greater literary opportunities of New York City. Far more than the wealth and fame Dreiser admittedly sought, Ehrmann prized the friendships and tranquillity he found in Terre Haute. Chatting with acquaintances during his frequent walks about the city, offering advice and encouragement to young writers, lunching with the professors at Indiana State Teachers College, sitting placidly on a bench in Deming Park, or exercising on the archery range--these were the activities that gave his life meaning, that filled him with the inner peace and human understanding so characteristic of his writing. Concerning this decision to pursue the poet's life in Terre Haute, Ehrmann wrote in his journal:

In large cities one's views are diffused; here none escapes one's microscope. The histories of many lives I have seen unfold year after year. Here there is romance and heroism-the whole drama of human life. Here in this smoky, commercial city that has not one bit of bronze or marble for the public eye-yes, even here let me keep my eyes open, my feelings warm, my understanding keen. Let me drive out of myself the universal madness to be elsewhere in search of the joy of life, for the joy of life resides within oneself. Let me universalize my sympathies, let me understand the young man eager for money, the young poet eager for beauty, and all youth eager for love. All this here in this dear city of my birth.

On September 26, 1872, Max Ehrmann was born in a small brick house in the 600-block of North 4th Street, the fifth and last child of German immigrant parents, Maximilian Ehrmann and Margaret Barbara Lutz. The father, at nineteen years of age, had fled Germany in 1848, following the unsuccessful Bavarian rebellion, and eventually settled in Terre Haute. The Lutz family had emigrated one year later. ultimately making their home in Marshall, Illinois, In Terre Haute, the young couple met, were married, and made their permanent home. Maximilian Ehrmann, a cabinet maker for the railroad, provided his family a comfortable home, but more significantly, he gave his children an example of integrity and devotion. As his youngest son recalled after the father's death, "He was a diligent, loving father and he did all in his power to show us the true path of life--industry, honor, and the forward look. My mother once told me she had never known him dishonorable in word or deed." His mother he described as "a sweettempered woman a sacred memory."

In this close-knit family a love of the arts flourished. Ehrmann's most vivid memories included his mother's reading aloud from the German classics and his father's reciting the poetry of Schiller, whose bust was proudly displayed in the Ehrmann home. Also, the church was a compelling force in their houselhold. Each Sunday the family attended the German Methodist Church, the children returning in the afternoon for catechism. Thus began the spiritual questions that Ehrmann would ponder for a lifetime. Though the events of the coming years, specifically his studies of science, would move him more and more toward a humanistic position, he never lost his reverence for "Jesus the philosopher" or his faith that "the universe is unfolding as it should." Despite his unorthodox views, Ehrmann was regarded by all who knew him well to be a deeply religious man.

Ehrmann received his introduction to some of the grimmer aspects of life--war, injustice, human suffering--from his maternal grandfather. Grandfather Lutz had fought in the Bavarian rebellion and could still

recall vividly the scenes of carnage, privation, and religious persecution. These tales, though terrifying, resulted in Ehrmann's early passion for the study of history and his initiation to a world of chaos and brutality.

By the time Ehrmann had reached college age, the coal-mining prosperity of his oldest brother, Charles, made it possible for him to enter DePauw University at Greencastle, Indiana. He found a congenial atmosphere at "Lovely Greencastle." He played an active role in the life of the Delta Tau Delta fraternity and became editor of the DePauw Weekly. But most important, the wooded campus, intellectual aura, and pervasive tranquillity stimulated his idealism and brought him to what was perhaps the pivotal decision of his intellectual life. Thirty years later he recaptured that moment of decision in his journal:

I remember once, in the dreamy anxious days of my youth, having climbed the only tower at DePauw University, I looked westward toward my native city and lifted my hands in a vow that I would dedicate my life to some great cause, that my native city might be proud of me. Boyish whim! Yet how many boys under a like spell have taken similar sacred vows. Sacred? Yes; for often it is these vows in the glorious, incandescent days of youth that give the only glow there is in the long, laborious years that follow, . . I promised God to be gentle all my life and to pursue only high ideals, even though I should remain poor. Here it was I looked into the face of the night and resolved to try to write beautiful books.

Boyish whim or not, Ehrmann remembered that pledge always and remained faithful to it.

Thereafter, DePauw remained his "spiritual home," to which he returned frequently during his lifetime for inspiration and renewal. One such visit inspired his sonnet "DePauw Revisited."

Is this the very place I knew so well!
These lofty trees, in leafy green array-Are these the slender saplings of my day?
These old, remembered buildings--how they quell
The heart's despair! And here fond memories dwell
On long-forgotten scenes. I used to stray
Along this path; she often came this way
We walked together as the twilight fell.
Here for my future I conceived a scheme
Of beautiful, courageous, useful years,
Inspiring joy and solacing of tears.
I little knew I should sometimes blaspheme,
Because of all my failures and my fears.
Yet I am glad that I still have my dream.

And Ehrmann's affection for the university proved reciprocal. In 1938, he was invited to compose the commemorative Ode for the DePauw Centennial Celebration. At that same ceremony, he was honored with a Doctor of Letters degree in recognition of his literary achievements. In 1954 the poet's widow, Mrs. Bertha King Ehrmann, presented his literary estate--manuscripts, letters, and other memorabilia--to DePauw University, where it is now being preserved in the Roy O. West Library.

Following his graduation from DePauw in 1894, Ehrmann entered the School of Philosophy at Harvard University, where he spent two years specializing in law and philosophy. The pretentiousness and regional snobbery of the "Harvard men" was amusing to the idealistic Hoosier and provided the material for some satirical sketches written for the Boston Herald; these sketches and others were ultimately collected and published as Ehrmann's first book, A Farrago (1898). Also written during these years at Harvard was The Mystery of Madeline Le Blanc (1900), a tale set during the French Revolution. Like so many writers, Ehrmann would eventually look back on these earliest literary attempts with some embarrassment. "I now see," he wrote toward the end of his life, "that my earlier books were less than nothing. They were but a part of that debris of fiction that tumbles blatantly over the public each spring and autumn."

Academically, Harvard accelerated the intellectual development begun at DePauw. The university, Ehrmann felt, was "in its golden age of scholarship" and exposed him to many of the world's greatest philosophical minds--William James, Josiah Royce, Hugo Munsterberg, Herbert Palmer, Charles Eliot Norton, George Santayana, and Charles Eliot. He took courses from some of these men and had the opportunity to hear all of them lecture. It was, however, the more intimate conversations he enjoyed with these scholars, either when he encountered them by chance on the campus or when he received a treasured invitation to their homes, that remained the golden moments of his Harvard experience.

Upon leaving Harvard, Ehrmann was at the crossroads: he could pursue the ideal to which he had dedicated himself at DePauw, pursue it perhaps into oblivion, or he could use his education for more practical ends. As he wrote his mother in January, 1895:

Of course you would like to know about my future. I tell you honestly I would like to know myself. I have hopes to be a writer. I do not tell this to everybody, because thousands of others have the same hopes. But years will tell. If I have any ideas that the world will be glad to read, then I may succeed; if I have not such ideas, then I shall fail. It is a risk, a chance. This much is sure--if I fail, I have my education, and that no man can take away, and with it I ought to be able to make a living. Of course I might study law, and settle down some place and be a successful lawyer and

make money, even hold some political office. But what are these things compared with a place in the hearts of people as a writer of good and inspiring books?

His earlier interest in the ministry had been slowly eroded by his fears that the more orthodox Christian doctrines were too dogmatic and simplistic to allow the intellectual freedom and growth that he now desired. He would have preferred to become a teacher of philosophy, and perhaps would have done so, had a contract offered by a western university not included the requirement that he preach a sermon each Sunday in some rural church. Refusing to compromise his position on the ministry, he passed up this opportunity to teach and write and returned to Terre Haute to lead the precarious life of a poet and philosopher.

Through he worked steadily and somewhat successfully at his art-publishing six books in the ten years following his return to Terre Haute--Ehrmann soon discovered that most men did not regard a love of art as an adequate reason for being. "Alas!" he lamented in his journal. "Such an end in life is not to be spoken aloud. I soon discovered that, if it became known that one pursued any object for the mere love of the labor without any thought of money rewards, one would be looked upon with suspicion--even contempt. To work for a purpose not involving returns in money is beyond the comprehension of both the handworkers and the business men. The former will say, 'He is crazy,' and the latter, 'Keep an eye on him.' I soon found that I must pretend to be writing for money; and what is more, I must create the impression that I am making it." A sense of Ehrmann's frustration, as well as his firm belief in the rightness of his own choice, is reflected in his poem "A Tradesman and a Poet."

"Do these things pay-these poems that you write?" "Oh! yes, so much I am almost ashamed Of my reward, so very great it is." "Then tell me why you are so poorly dressed?" "I did not know that I was poorly dressed." "Indeed you are. And think of how you live. You should have blooming gardens, houses grand, If your reward is great as you have said. I understand you live in three small rooms." "And that is two too many, I'm afraid." "You do not travel. Do you travel, sir?" "Oh! yes, I go each week into the woods, And often sit upon the river bank." "You are not loved by any woman, sir; And have you any children of your own?" "I love all women, every child is mine." "Come, come, these poems do not pay, I know." "Oh! yes, they pay me very well, indeed." "Then, what have you been doing with the pay Received? Have you some secret investments?"

Ultimately, Ehrmann seemingly accepted the sad truth that literature, at least for a time, would have to be an avocation, for he turned to the practice of law and became deputy prosecuting attorney, a position he held for two years. By day, he witnessed society at its worst-"filthy minds and bodies" on trial for the most violent and sordid crimes; by night, he burned incense in his office, read, and wrote. In this manner, he maintained what he considered a mental balance and saved himself from desperation. For a time, he even involved himself in politics, speaking in behalf of Democratic candidates at the local and state levels. But he would never run for office himself, preferring the poet's mantle to any that politics could bestow.

As time passed, his "avocation" began to consume more and more of his time and energy. He eagerly accepted invitations to speak to local groups on literary and scientific topics; he became president of the Terre Haute Literary Club; and ultimately he began to travel for the Central Lyceum Bureau of Indianapolis, giving readings throughout the Midwest. The inevitable result of this double life was illness in the form of typhoid fever, which forced him into a period of convalescence lasting for several months. During this time of inactivity and depression, Ehrmann wrote "A Prayer," which he then threw into the waste basket in a gesture of despair. It was retrieved by a friend to become, upon publication, a message of hope for thousands.

Let me do my work each day; and if the darkened hours of despair overcome me, may I not forget the strength that comforted me in the desolation of other times. May I still remember the bright hours that found me walking over silent hills of my childhood, or dreaming on the margin of the quiet river, when a light glowed within me, and I promised my early God to have courage amid the tempests of the changing years. Spare me from bitterness and from the sharp passions of unguarded moments. May I not forget that poverty and riches are of the spirit. Though the world know me not, may my thoughts and actions be such as shall keep me friendly with myself. Lift my eyes from the earth, and let me not forget the uses of the stars. Forbid that I should judge others lest I condemn myself. Let me not follow the clamor of the world, but walk calmly in my path. Give me a few friends who will love me for what I am; and keep ever burning before my vagrant steps the kindly light of hope. And though age and infirmity overtake me, and I come not within sight of the castle of my dreams, teach me still to be thankful for life, and for time's golden memories that are good and sweet; and may the evening's twilight find me gentle still.

Long before the popularity of "Desiderata," "A Prayer" spread Max Ehrmann's name around the world. It was translated into several foreign languages; it was recited on the floor of Congress in 1909; and for a period of time, every person convicted in the Court of Special Sessions in Chicago was given a copy to contemplate. During the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904, a hand-illuminated copy hung on the wall of the Indiana building--until it was stolen. Since then many copies have hung on walls around the world.

Following his recovery, Ehrmann returned to the business world as a lawyer and credit manager for his brothers' overall manufacturing firm. He found that position more compatible to his nature than the role of deputy prosecuting attorney had been; yet, he was not content. The never-ending emphasis on cash profits; the noise of the factory; the plight of the laborers--all were sources of concern and ultimately depression. "As a business man," he later wrote, "I was overwhelmed by the brutality of human relations. The ethics of business were repellent to me--the sharp trading, the subterranean influences, the grinding down of the worker. The fault is less in human nature than in our economic system. We shall emerge from this primitive economics."

Always he looked forward to the day when he could devote himself wholly to his writing, the kind of writing he wanted and needed to do, not necessarily the kind that would sell. Frequently he was advised to write for the market. As one publisher stated rather bluntly, "Write just one novel to make a killing and then do your other work." In regard to those who thought of literature primarily as a salable commodity, Ehrmann responded with a paraphrase of Thoreau: "I march to music that they do not hear." And so, rather than compromise his literary ideals and become a hack writer, he remained at the overall factory for ten years, devoting his nights to literature and saving his money for the day that he would be financially free. He also composed a few lines for himself and kept them ever in sight on his desk:

Keep interested in your own career. See in the future some progress, however little. Know that to begin again, when you have failed, is itself a great success. Maintain the respect of them that meet you day by day through sincerity, not servility. Condemn conditions rather than men. Believe and say some good of life. And though you lash injustice with bitter words, be still sweet at heart. Here is a battlefield for the courage of a hero.

Despite the many frustrations and anxieties of these years as deputy prosecuting attorney and credit manager of the manufacturing firm, Ehrmann's literary production remained constant. In 1904 he published **Breaking Home Ties**, a book-length narrative poem into which he put his own feelings of disillusionment with the world of business. In this poem a father counsels his son concerning the road to success in life. The deceased mother, the father speculates, would doubtless have sent the son off to the city with idealistic views about the

correlation between success and virtuous conduct. Having led a sheltered life, she would have believed that "Success will come by love and truth and work." But the father had encountered the callousness of the city and had seen fortunes made by exploiting the laborer and cheating the public. Thus, he advises the son to find value and meaning in the love of his work, however humble, and the respect of his fellow man. The father concludes,

For houses grand and beauty made by toil
Are gained more oft by mastery o'er men
Than by kind words and gentle brotherhood.
Love men and truth, and poverty most like
Will dine with you, but peace will feed your soul.
Let selfishness guide all your thoughts and acts,
And in old age your storehouse may be full
Of grain and goods; for truth and love of men
Will garner only peace and inward joy.

The year 1906 saw the publication of two volumes of poetry, Max Ehrmann's Poems, issued locally by the Viguesney Publishing Company, and A Prayer and Other Selections, issued by the Dodge Publishing Company of New York, In 1910 The Poems of Max Ehrmann was published by Dodge. During this period he continued to write plays, and in 1911 published The Wife of Marobius, which dramatizes "the rights of woman to be loved for her own sake." This drama, set in ancient Rome, tells the story of Clodia, the wife, who is driven to attempted murder by the anguish of knowing that her husband loves only her body, disregarding her mind and soul. Drama Magazine, lamenting in 1917 that The Wife of Marobius had never been produced, praised its "fine and sure sense of technique, subtle understanding of the feminine mind, and noble feeling for beauty at once sensuous and moral." The Wife of Marobius anticipated Ehrmann's widely acclaimed poem "Complacent Women--1918," written in behalf of the women's rights movement.

> Complacent women, sitting idly by, Bestirring not a hand for freedom's sake, Hear you no voices calling you to rise? Hear you no bitter cries of women slaves, Scar-marked and cuffed through all the ages past, The sea dirge of a sea of women's tears?

Complacent women sitting idly by, Bereft of dreams, dead-faced, with leaden souls, What sting will rouse you up to stand erect, Convert your placid thoughts to fierce demands, And warm your hearts with flames of human fire? Is there within your soul no pride of life, No whispered music, and no star of hope, That you have no desire for human rights? Slaves of ten thousand years, or playthings cheap, I taunt you, sting you with the tongue of shame, To rouse you up to claim your heritage.

In 1915, Ehrmann published his most ambitious play, Jesus: A Passion Play. In it he strips all the mysticism and supernatural occurrences from the final three days of Christ's life. Jesus the philosopher emerges, a man capable of both fear and anger, but always a man of love, forgiveness, and devotion to God. "In Jesus: A Passion Play," Ehrmann recalled in his journal, "I hoped to save the reputation of a great philosopher from the opprobrium of being an ineffectual, second-rate god."

By 1912, at the age of forty, Ehrmann had severed his connections with the world of business, determined to devote himself to literature, the only pursuit he had ever found truly rewarding. As he told an interviewer toward the end of his life, "At DePauw I contacted a disease which I have never shaken off. The disease was Idealism. I took it to Harvard with me where I studied philosophy. Because of it I did the thing in life I wanted to do--Writing." In a three-room apartment at 128 1/2 South Sixth Street, Ehrmann lived the last thirty-three years as he had always wanted to live, as a poet and philosopher.

In the general scheme of 20th Century American literature, Ehrmann often marched to a different music. He disliked the obscurity and elaborate symbolism that had become so dominant in poetry. He also deplored the emphasis on the ugly, the brutal, and the hopeless, so typical of the Naturalistic movement, "Mainly for publicity purposes," he noted in his journal in 1926, "we are flooded by a sea of masochistic and sadistic art. Literature, sculpture and painting vie in the mutilation of nature, in the defamation of life. To wallow in the mud is as inexcusable in art as it is in life. Yet art should not be photography. To create a mood, within certain limits art must deal somewhat freely with nature; but art should not go beyond nature's possibilities and rarely beyond nature's probabilities. Vulgarity and deformity, dressed up as the real, are now in vogue." Ehrmann readily admitted that ugliness and chaos existed abundantly in the lives of all men, and he accepted as the artist's mission the responsibility to scourge evil and injustice wherever he found them; however, he persistently maintained that the artist's role was no merely to dwell on the negative but rather to point out the beauty and goodness which was also a part of life-beauty and goodness that could inspire in men the courage and compassion to rise above such chaos and find inner peace. In the final analysis, he felt that the artist had to offer a glimpse of the ideal, a faith that the ugliness is more the appearance than the reality. His

poem "Dark Days" reflects not only this recognition of evil and tragedy but also his determination to rise above it and maintain hope.

What fool shall say, "My days are fair, God's in his world and all is well," When half mankind shrieks in despair Worse than in Dante's flaming hell!

I cannot sing in happy mood While hostile armies take their toll On these dark days I toil and brood With starless midnight in my soul.

And yet, O World, O Life, O God! I find myself, just as the fool, Believing in thy chastening rod, Believing still that love must rule.

Because of his philosophy of hope, peace, and love, Ehrmann frequently found himself in opposition to many of the writers and thinkers of his time, men such as Eugene V. Debs, Theodore Dreiser, and to a lesser degree, James Whitcomb Riley. As a student at Harvard, Ehrmann had stood for half an hour waiting his turn to shake Deb's hand, and from that meeting developed a friendship that lasted for over twenty years. Debs' championing the underdog struck a responsive chord in Ehrmann, who also had deplored the exploitation of labor that he had witnessed as a part of the business world. Also, Ehrmann could see something of his own situation in the neglect that Debs experienced in Terre Haute. In 1910, at the height of their friendship, Ehrmann eulogized Debs in Twentieth Century Magazine:

In some ways our distinguished fellow-townsman has wandered a stranger in the city of his birth. Here we have been the last to acknowledge his power and influence. We see him often, recognize him as a quiet, respected citizen, possessing those domestic virtues that all men and women admire; but the great Debs, the Debs who first arraigned the trust abuses in this country, who broke the first ground for the harvest of modern popular reform-that Debs we have never yet recognized, whatever one may think of his doctrines.

That same year Ehrmann lent his poetic talents to the cause of labor in a sonnet titled "America--1910."

Lincoln, rise up from out thy tomb to-day, Thou lover of the lives of common men, America hath work for thee again. Here women want in sight of wealth's display.

Man grinds his brother down and holds a sway
As in the times of bloody lash and den,
Save now the flesh is white, not black as then.
In toiling holes young men grow old, decay.
Though thou art dead, could but thy soul return
In one who loved his fellow-men as thou;
Instead of greed that we might justice learn,
Love character in place of gold as now,
Write far across our native land's dear soil,
"Here none shall live upon another's toil!"

The bond between Debs and Ehrmann was weakened and broken, however, by World War I. Debs opposed the war with Germany, which Ehrmann felt was a tragic necessity and supported with his pen. But even more disillusioning to Ehrmann was Debs' cry for violent revolution in this country. During Debs' first week of imprisonment in 1919, Ehrmann recorded his disillusionment in his journal: "For twenty years, by word of tongue or pen, I have been telling the people that Debs is not a revolutionist. How mistaken I was! What a mystery, how so charming a personality, so really lovable in his private life, would have us all at each other's throats, to accomplish what?--the brotherhood of man. Could anything be more incredible?" Ehrmann's hope for peace and gentleness in all human relations had made Debs' advocacy of force unacceptable. "What is accomplished by force," Ehrmann stated late in his life, "rarely remains accomplished. The people of a nation may be terrorized and made submissive, but only sympathetic instruction will win their genuine cooperation."

Another native son with whom Ehrmann could identify was Theodore Dreiser. Ehrmann, who had met Dreiser personally and had corresponded with him on occasion, admired the novelist's dogged refusal to yield to the popular tastes in literature, a refusal that had resulted in years of poverty and neglect. Dreiser, Ehrmann believed, had done much to free literature from "silly romanticism and prudery." But Dreiser lacked the warmth and idealism necessary to win Ehrmann's personal affection. "Dreiser has neither charm of style nor devotion to persons, though he is capable of devotion to a cause" Ehrmann wrote in 1932. "His great virtue--gaunt, elephantine virtue!--is devotion to truth about external facts. The facts of the inner life: the whole background of aspirations, exaltations, experience and scholarship unified into a knowing, reposeful personality--to these he is a stranger. I cannot conceive any personal devotion to Dreiser."

Ehrmann's reaction to James Whitcomb Riley was the exact opposite. Riley's poetry and personality had warmth that Ehrmann found personally attractive; however, the message of Riley's poetry was nostalgia, not progress or hope for the future. Shortly after Riley's death in 1916, Ehrmann wrote: "Riley had gentleness and a keen eye for the personal joys and sorrows of the plain people. He did not see

the social causes of those personal sorrows. . . . He sang of a culture that already has passed away and now is only a lovely memory in an age of machine and haste."

Ultimately, Max Ehrmann received the recognition and appreciation that he had seemingly longed for in his earlier years. During his final years, his life and work were the subjects of numerous articles and reviews, and on Sunday, June 24, 1945, Terre Haute formally paid tribute to Ehrmann in a ceremony at the Swope Art Gallery, Following his death three months later, on September 9, tributes were written by those who knew him best. The most extensive is Max Ehrmann: A Poet's Life, written by Bertha King Ehrmann, his long-time friend and wife during the final year of his life. Included in this biography are the appreciative reminiscences of several Indiana State Teachers College professors, with whom Ehrmann had lunched over the years. Uniformly, they remembered him as a man of great charm and tranquillity, whose breadth of knowledge, depth of insight, honesty of intellect, and absence of prejudice made him a stimulating listener and a provocative conversationalist. The atmosphere of those luncheons was perhaps best captured by Dean John E. Grinnell, who recalled: "He was the teacher without a classroom. But he always had a class. Whenever he came among us, no matter what our professional degrees or achievements, we became students again. Often he talked little. Sitting quietly, nodding, putting in a question, adding a fact, pulling together ends that appeared loose, he was the master. The years had given him wisdom and calm strength. We who sat with him went back to our classes a little wiser and more assured of the goodness of life." The late Dr. Harry V. Wann, an artist himself, admired Ehrmann's ability to couple a depth of poetic feeling with the warm, wholesome philosophy gained through years of quiet contemplation. "'Desiderata," wrote Dr. Wann," offers a perfect reflection of the mind and spirit of Max Ehrmann. The friendliness of the man, his tolerance, his sincerity, self discipline, his adaptability to the changing seasons of life, his respect for the sacred passions of life, his staunch faith in the goodness of life--all are in 'Desiderata,' "

Go placidly amid the noise and the haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence. As far as possible, without surrender, be on good terms with all persons. Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even to the dull and the ignorant; they too have their story. Avoid loud and aggressive persons; they are vexatious to the spirit. If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain or bitter, for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself. Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time. Exercise caution in your business affairs, for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals, and everywhere life is full of heroism. Be

yourself. Especially do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love; for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment, it is as perennial as the grass. Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth. Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness. Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should. Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be. And whatever your labors and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life, keep peace in your soul. With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Be cheerful. Strive to be happy.

Like so many of Ehrmann's works, "Desiderata," written in 1927, grew out of an inner need and was shared with others wishing similar comfort and assurance. "I carried this bit of prose in my pocket for many months," Ehrmann once noted. "I wrote it for myself. The virtues it counsels I was in need of."

The renewed popularity of "Desiderata" in recent years has given Max Ehrmann a posthumous fame far beyond that which he knew in life. Since 1965, the prose-poem has been published by countless newspapers and magazines, included in anthologies and textbooks, read on national television and radio shows, reproduced as scrolls and posters, and translated into several foreign languages, including French, Spanish, and German. In response to this interest in "Desiderata," Crescendo Publishing Company, which owns the copyright to Ehrmann's poetry, brought out The Poems of Max Ehrmann (1966), edited by Bertha K. Ehrmann. In September, 1971, "Desiderata" was released as a 45 rpm single record by Warner Brothers, music by Fred Warner and narration by Les Crane. Quickly the record reached America's top ten in popularity and has had similar success in Europe, particularly England. On March 14, 1972, "Desiderata" was chosen for a Grammy Award as the "Best Spoken Word Recording." This success has resulted in the poem's being produced in the form of sheet music for piano and choir. Robert Bell, president of Crescendo Publishing Company, predicts the poem's perennial popularity, particularly during the Christmas season.

In death as in life, however, Max Ehrmann did not come by his fame easily. In fact, as late as December, 1971, Good Housekeeping published the poem over the acknowledgement, "Found in Old Saint Paul's Chruch, Baltimore, 1962." This is but one example of a long-standing confusion which has plagued Crescendo Publishing Company, the Vigo County Historical Society, and the present rector of Old Saint Paul's Anglican Chruch in Baltimore, where people still come daily expecting to find the message carved on a grave marker dating from 1692.

The confusion apparently developed from the poetic interests of

Reverend Frederick Ward Kates, who served as rector of Saint Paul's from 1956 to 1961, "Desiderata" had been a favorite of Reverend Kates, who had quoted it in a booklet titled Between Dawn and Dark, giving the proper credit to Max Ehrmann, The confusion, however, developed from Reverend Kates' practice of mimeographing inspirational messages and distributing the sheets to the congregation. These sheets wete usually marked "Saint Paul's Church, Baltimore, 1692" to indicate the place, not the source of the original message. The congregation "found" the mimeographed sheets in the pews, carried them away, sent the poem to friends and magazine editors, and gradually the belief developed that the poem dated from the Seventeenth Century, when the church was founded. Then, to contribute to an already confusing situation, the production company that made the Crane-Warner recording called itself "Old St. Paul Productions." As a result, Robert Bell has been forced to deal with several copyright violations; many tourists have made disappointing pilgrimages to Saint Paul's Church; and countless people enjoy and profit from the poem unaware or sceptical of Ehrmann's authorship.

To say that "Desiderata" has been "rediscovered" or has "returned" to popularity is to imply that it had at one time virtually disappeared, which is hardly the case. During the Korean Conflict, chaplains used the poem in religious services, and most recently actress Joan Crawford in her autobiography, Joan Crawford: My Way of Life, identifies "Desiderata" as a poem that has had meaning in her life. The biggest impetus, however, came from Adlai Stevenson's decision in 1965 to use "Desiderata" on his Christmas greeting cards. When his sudden death earlier in the year prevented this, the poem was used in tributes to his life and work, thereby gaining national publicity.

In 1918, doubtless oppressed by a sense of futility, Ehrmann wrote: "May I not be ungrateful for the small public that reads and loves my writings. As time goes on, the number may increase. Perhaps even when I am dead, some browser in libraries will come upon me, and, seeing that I was not altogether unworthy, will resurrect me from the dust of things forgotten." In these lines, as he did in so many others, Max Ehrmann anticipated the future.

"Perhaps even when I am dead, some browser in libraries will come upon me, and, seeing that I was not altogether unworthy, will resurrect me from the dust of things forgotten."

--from The Journal of Max Ehrmann.

MAX EHRMANN CENTENNIAL ARCHIVE COLLECTION

REFERENCE DO NOT CIRCULATE

MAX EHRMANN CENTENNIAL ARCHIVE COLLECTION

A listing of materials and information in the Vigo County Public Library covering the period September 1971 to November 1972 relating to the Max Ehrmann Centennial held in Terre Haute, September 21-23, 1972. Compiled by Edward N. Howard.

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DESIDERATA: SEPTEMBER 1971 - JUNE 1972

- These materials cover the events that led to the plans for the Max Ehrmann Centennial; they also dispel the myth that Desiderata was found on a 17th Century tombstone at a Baltimore church.
- DESIDERATA. Phonorecord (45 rpm), Les Crane on Warner/Reprise label, Warner Bros. 7520 (PCA 0553). Produced by Fred Werner and Les Crane for Old St. Paul Productions. Flip side, A Different Drummer. Released September 1971.
- MAX EHRMANN'S DESIDERATA HITS TOP TEN ON LOCAL SONG HIT LISTS.

 By Barbara Brugnaux in <u>Terre Haute Tribune-Star</u>, November 21, 1971.
- DESIDERATA. Phonorecord (LP), Les Crane on Warner Bros. 2570.

 Produced for Old St. Paul Productions by Fred Werner and
 Les Crane. Other songs: Vision, Friends, Beauty, Happiness, Esperanza, Wilderness, Courage, Independence, and
 Children Learn What They Live. 1971. Poster of Desiderata enclosed with phonorecord.
- DESIDERATA. Audiotape cassette (see above), Warner Bros. M5-2570.
- EHRMANN WORKS ACHIEVING FAME. By Frances Hughes in Terre Haute Star, December 10, 1971.
- THE DESIDERATA. Songbook containing words and music of Desiderata and nine other poems and songs on the Desiderata phonorecord. Published by Screen Gems--Columbia Publications, division of Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc., Miami, Florida, 1972. 56 p. \$2.95.
- THE DESIDERATA (You Are a Child of the Universe). Sheet music with words, published separately from above by Screen Gems. 6 p. 95¢.
- DETERIORATA. Audiotape cassette of phonorecord (45 rpm), National Lampoon label, from the Blue Thumb LP RADIO DINNER, Banana Records, 1972. (A take-off on the hit recording of Desiderata.)
- DESIDERATA: A MESSAGE OF INSPIRATION FOR THE GRADUATE. Illustrated booklet, Hallmark Mementoes, 150GTR 1-1. Hallmark Cards, Inc., 1972. 28 p. \$1.50.
- 1971 GRAMMY CHAMPIONS. Best Spoken Word Recording: Desiderata--Les Crane (Warner Bros.). Report of the 14th Annual Grammy Awards, Madison Square Garden's Felt Forum (New York City) in <u>Billboard</u>, March 25, 1972.
- DESIDERATA PUBLISHER R. L. BELL HERE TO GET FACTS ON EHRMANN. By Joe Boland in Star, March 29, 1972.

- PUBLISHER SEEKS INFO ON MAX EHRMANN. Terre Haute Tribune, March 29, 1972.
- ROBERT BELL INTERVIEW. Motion picture film, 16mm magnetic. Interview by Bruce McClelland, WTHI-TV, March 29, 1972, 4 min.
- ROBERT BELL NEWSCASTS. Audiotape of newscasts by WTHI-TV 10 with interview by Bruce McClelland, and WTWO-TV 2 with interview by Frank Jerome, March 29, 1972. Cassette recording by Vigo County Public Library.
- REMINISCENCES OF EHRMANN. Audiotape of Robert Bell conversations with Madeline Manson, Rebecca Hood, and Mrs. Taylor, March 29, 1972, 35 min. Cassette recording by Vigo County Public Library.
- ROBERT L. BELL. Saturday Spectator, April 8, 1972.
- TERRE HAUTE HOMILY CAUSES CONFUSION. By Robin Adams Sloan in Indianapolis News, April 24, 1972.
- HOWARD TO SPEAK TO WORLD WAR I VETS WEDNESDAY (on The Meaning of Desiderata). Tribune, May 2, 1972.
- WORLD WAR I DINNER PARTY SET FOR WEDNESDAY. Star, May 3, 1972.
- POPULARITY OF DESIDERATA. By Carmen Gordon in Library Alert column, Tribune-Star, May 7, 1972.
- ARE YOU MOVED BY THIS READING? Advertisement in Psychology Today, June 1972, by Graphics, Venice, California, offering for \$2.25 a scroll lithographed in brown and gold, 12" x 18" parchment, with wording "Found in Old St. Paul's Church: Dated 1692."
- 280-YEAR-OLD COUNSEL COMFORTS. Ann Landers column, <u>Indian-apolis Star</u>, June 10, 1972, Desiderata quoted with credit "Found in St. Paul's Church, Baltimore, dated 1692." Retraction by Ann Landers in her column, <u>Indian-apolis Star</u>, November 25, 1972.
- DESIDERATA. Posterboard, imprinted "Max Ehrmann, copyright 1927, Indiana Publishing Co., Terre Haute, Ind." Autographed by Max Ehrmann, presented to Vigo County Library by former Library Board member, Dr. William G. Kessel, on June 26, 1972.
- DR. WILLIAM P. ALLYN DISCUSSES MAX EHRMANN. Audiotape of interview by Joe Boland, <u>Star</u>, and Ed Howard, Vigo County Public Library, June 27, 1972, 42 min. Cassette recording by VCPL.

CENTENNIAL: TERRE HAUTE NEWSPAPERS

- PLAN CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY OBSERVANCE HERE FOR EHRMANN. By Joe Boland in Star, June 20, 1972.
- MAX EHRMANN CENTENNIAL BEING PLANNED. Tribune, June 21.
- PLANS BEGUN FOR OBSERVANCE. Spectator, June 24.
- MAX EHRMANN CENTENNIAL SET FOR SEPTEMBER. Star, June 27.
- DR. KESSEL PRESENTS COPY OF DESIDERATA AUTOGRAPHED BY EHRMANN. Star, June 27.
- MAX EHRMANN. WAAC Radio Station Editorial, June 28.
- MAX EHRMANN PHOTOS WANTED. Tribune, July 6.
- CHAMBER OF COMMERCE TO PRESENT MAX EHRMANN CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION. Statesman, July 6.
- EHRMANN PHOTOS ASKED BY MUSEUM. Star, July 7.
- NOTES FROM VIGO HISTORICAL MUSEUM. Spectator, July 8.
- EXCHANGE CLUB OF VIGO COUNTY TO HEAR FELT. Tribune-Star, July 9.
- PLANS UNDERWAY FOR MAX EHRMANN CENTENNIAL. Spectator, July 22.
- LIBRARY PACKET TELLS ABOUT MAX EHRMANN. Tribune-Star, July 23.
- STEERING COMMITTEE MAKES EHRMANN CENTENNIAL PLANS. Tribune-Star, July 23.
- EHRMANN CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE ROUNDS OUT PLANS FOR FESTIVITIES.

 Spectator, August 5.
- A PLUG FOR TERRE HAUTE'S CELEBRATION. Tribune, August 16.
- KING CLASSICAL SCHOOL WILL HAVE REUNION. Star, August 24.
- KING CLASSICAL SCHOOL REUNION SET FOR EHRMANN CENTENNIAL. Tribune-Star, August 27.
- DAR CHAPTER PLANS PROGRAM FOR 1972-73. Star, August 28.
- HOWARD INVITES EHRMANN FRIENDS TO SEPT. 7 MEETING. Tribune, September 1.
- LIBRARY SEEKS FRIENDS OF MAX EHRMANN. Star, September 2.

- FORMER STUDENTS AT KING CLASSICAL SCHOOL. <u>Tribune-Star</u>, September 3.
- PLANNING REUNION. Star, September 4.
- MAX EHRMANN CENTENNIAL OPENS SEPT. 18. Tribune, September 5.
- MAX EHRMANN CENTENNIAL BEGINS HERE SEPTEMBER 18. By Gladys Seltzer in Star, September 6.
- FRIENDS OF MAX EHRMANN MEET, AID CELEBRATION PLANS. By Joe Boland in Star, September 8.
- MAX EHRMANN CENTENNIAL MOVES AHEAD. Tribune, September 8.
- KING CLASSICAL REUNION PLANS ARE ADVANCED. Tribune-Star, September 10.
- FRIENDS OF MAX EHRMANN INVITED TO TAPE SESSION. Tribune, September 12.
- FRIENDS OF EHRMANN TO HELP WITH SCRIPT, TAPE FOR CELEBRATION. Star, September 13.
- MAX EHRMANN ITEMS TO BE SOLD AT FLEA MARKET. Star, September 13.
- MAX EHRMANN CENTENNIAL OPENS MONDAY. Tribune, September 14.
- MAX EHRMANN CENTENNIAL WEEK BEGINS SEPTEMBER 18. By Joe Boland in Star, September 14.
- PLAN TRIBUTE TO BERTHA KING, WHO MARRIED MAX EHRMANN. Star, September 15.
- POETS STUDY CLUB. Tribune-Star, September 17.
- SPECIAL MUSIC FOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEET. Tribune-Star, September 17.
- MAX EHRMANN CENTENNIAL OBSERVANCE SEPT. 22-23. <u>Tribune-Star</u> (rotogravure page), September 17.
- AUDIENCE TO HAVE STAGE AT EHRMANN SYMPOSIUM. Star, September 18.
- MAX EHRMANN CELEBRATION GETS UNDERWAY. Tribune, September 18.
- MAX EHRMANN ITEMS DONATED FOR SALE HERE. Tribune, September 19.
- MAX EHRMANN'S 'PRAYER' ANSWERED AT LAST. By Joe Boland in Star, September 20.

- EHRMANN'S WORKS TO HELP FINANCE CENTENNIAL FESTIVAL. Star, September 20.
- RENOWNED POET TO BE HONORED AT STATE. <u>Statesman</u>, September 20.
- OUT-OF-TOWNERS COMING TO KING SCHOOL REUNION. Tribune, September 21.
- COMPLETE PROGRAM ANNOUNCED FOR GALA EHRMANN CONCERT. By Gladys Seltzer in Star, September 21.
- MAX EHRMANN CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION NEARS CLIMAX. By Carolyn Toops in Tribune, September 21.
- EHRMANN CELEBRATION HERE TO END SATURDAY. Star, September 22.
- BIRTHPLACE MARKED. Star, September 22.
- EHRMANN CONCERT SATURDAY NIGHT. By Carolyn Toops in <u>Tribune</u>, September 22.
- SWOPE GALLERY DISPLAYS WORKS OF EHRMANN. Star, September 22.
- TREASURER OF HISTORICAL SOCIETY RESIGNS. Tribune, September 22.
- MAX EHRMANN--MANY HONOR POET, PHILOSOPHER. By Gladys Seltzer in <u>Star</u>, September 23.
- VCSC PAYS TRIBUTE TO MAX EHRMANN. Spectator, September 23.
- STATEMENTS INVITED FROM FRIENDS OF MAX EHRMANN. Spectator, September 23.
- EHRMANN'S PAPERS AT DEPAUW U. By Carolyn Toops in <u>Tribune</u>, September 23.
- KING CLASSICAL SCHOOL. Tribune-Star, September 24.
- HUNDREDS ENJOY EHRMANN CONCERT. Tribune-Star, September 24.
- ACTIVITIES FOR FINAL DAY. Spectator, September 30.
- DAVID J. OLSON, LUNCHEON SPEAKER. Spectator, September 30.
- CONCANNON HEARS THREE SPEAKERS. Tribune-Star, October 8.
- EHRMANN EARNS WRITER'S SALUTE. By Ed Stattmann in <u>Tribune</u> (UPI Indianapolis), October 10.
- FOND MEMORIES OF KING CLASSICAL SCHOOL SHARED AT REUNION.

 Tribune-Star (rotogravure page), November 5.

- HIGHLIGHTS OF MAX EHRMANN CENTENNIAL OBSERVANCE. Tribune-Star (rotogravure page), November 5.
- FOR EXCEPTIONAL JOURNALISM. Star, November 13.

CENTENNIAL: OTHER PRINT MEDIA

- FIFTY YEARS AGO TODAY. Activities and Comments, Terre Haute Area Chamber of Commerce, June.
- MAX EHRMANN CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION. <u>Director's Report to the Library Board</u>, Vigo County Public Library, June 19.
- MAX EHRMANN CELEBRATION BRINGS CALL FROM CALIFORNIA. Staff Bulletin, VCPL, June-July.
- EHRMANN CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION TAKING SHAPE. Activities and Comments, July.
- FAMOUS TERRE HAUTEANS (Max Ehrmann). By Ed Howard in Pride City Magazine, July 1.
- MAX EHRMANN: FLOWER CHILD A CENTURY TOO EARLY. By Fred D. Cavinder in <u>Indianapolis</u> Star Magazine, July 23.
- FIFTY YEARS AGO. Activities and Comments, August.
- PLANS FOR EHRMANN CENTENNIAL ATTRACTS STATE PUBLICITY. Activities and Comments, August.
- A FORGOTTEN POET GAINS RECOGNITION. By Herbert A. Kenny in Boston Sunday Globe, August 6.
- THE VCPL DOES TOTAL COVERAGE. <u>Staff Bulletin</u>, August-September.
- PROGRAM APPEALED TO STAFF. Staff Bulletin, August-September.
- SEPTEMBER MEETING. <u>Leaves of Thyme</u>, Vigo County Historical Society, September.
- KING CLASSICAL REUNION. Leaves of Thyme, September.
- CALENDAR OF EVENTS. Leaves of Thyme, September.
- EHRMANN CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION UNDERWAY. Activities and Comments, September.
- SIGHTS TO SEE (Historical Museum). By Ed Howard in <u>Pride City Magazine</u>, September 1.
- BULK OF EHRMANN MATERIAL AT DEPAUW. By David J. Olson, letter to editor, in <u>Indianpolis Star Magazine</u>, September 3.

- DESIDERATA. By Ed Howard (article with reprint of poem) in Pride City Magazine, September 15.
- NOT QUITE NEWS. Column in Brazil Daily Times, September 22.
- TV-2 REPORTS. Lee Bradley reports on the Max Ehrmann Centennial. TV Guide, September 24.
- EHRMANN CENTENNIAL APPLAUDED BY MANY. Activities and Comments, October.
- AMERICA'S CHRISTMAS CARD PHILOSOPHER. By Fred D. Cavinder, feature for Metropolitan Sunday Newspapers, Inc., release date December 10.

CENTENNIAL AUDIOTAPES

- FRIENDS OF MAX EHRMANN. Taping session at Indiana Cable Television studio, September 13. Dr. William P. Allyn, Dr. Vachel Breidenbaugh, Mrs. Hilda Breidenbaugh, Mrs. Emma Black, Mrs. Bess Cunningham, Miss Frances Hughes, Mrs. Lela Lackey, Mrs. Madeline Manson. Jane Hazledine, moderator. Cassette, 45 min.
- THIRTY MINUTES. Documentary on Max Ehrmann by Greg Shaw and Jim Reed, WTHI-TV, September 16. Includes Max Ehrmann reading DESIDERATA, 78 rpm phonorecord loaned by DePauw University archives. Cassette recording of WTHI-TV broadcast.
- THE EHRMANN PAPERS. Speech by David Olson, DePauw University archivist, at Max Ehrmann Centennial luncheon, September 22, on the 600 items placed at DePauw in 1954 by Mrs. Ehrmann. Cassette, 30 min.
- ANGELUS BELL. Recording of the Angelus, St. Joseph Church, 113 S. 5th. (Also on Friends of Max Ehrmann audiotape for sound-slide presentation.)
- FRIENDS OF MAX EHRMANN. Edited narration by Jane Hazledine and Friends of Max Ehrmann used with Ehrmann Centennial slide show, 35 min. Cassette for manual projector operation; reel-to-reel, for automatic projection.
- SATURDAY SYMPOSIUM. Statements by Friends of Max Ehrmann at Saturday Symposium, Senior Citizens Center, September 23. Ed Howard, moderator. Cassette, 60 min.
- TV-2 REPORTS. Lee Bradley reports on the Max Ehrmann Centennial; interviews with Dorothy Clark at Vigo County Historical Museum and Ed Howard at Vigo County Public Library, September 24. Cassette recording of WTWO-TV broadcast, 30 min.

CENTENNIAL MOTION PICTURE FILMS

- FRIENDS OF MAX EHRMANN. News films by WTWO-TV of planning session at Senior Citizens Center, September 7. Silent 16mm magnetic, 2 min.
- TV-2 REPORTS. Lee Bradley reports on the Max Ehrmann Centennial; interviews with Dorothy Clark at Vigo County Historical Museum and Ed Howard at Vigo County Public Library, September 24. Sound, 16mm magnetic, 30 min.

CENTENNIAL PHOTOGRAPHS

- EHRMANN CENTENNIAL PLANS ADVANCED. Martin's Photo Shop, Tribune-Star, July 23.
- FORMER STUDENTS AT KING CLASSICAL SCHOOL. Martin, <u>Tribune</u>-Star, September 3.
- PLANNING REUNION. Richard Bruce Photographer, Star, September 4.

SCHOOL INVOLVEMENT. Kadel's Holiday Shoppe, Star, September 14.

BIRTHPLACE MARKED. Kadel, Star, September 22.

REHEARSING FOR EHRMANN CONCERT. Martin, Tribune, September 22.

MRS. GARWOOD AIDS EHRMANN CENTENNIAL. Martin, <u>Tribune</u>, September 23.

EHRMANN'S RELATIVES. Martin, Tribune-Star, September 24.

Martin, Tribune-Star Rotogravure, November 5:

FORMER TEACHERS.

DISPLAY OF YEARBOOKS.

MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS.

OUT OF TOWN GUESTS.

REHEARSING FOR THE CONCERT.

THE BIRTHPLACE.

House of Photography, <u>Tribune-Star</u> Rotogravure, November 5:

SEVERAL RELATIVES.

ED HOWARD.

CHORAL BACKGROUND.

Cornell, Mrs. Alfred, 1516 S. 6th St., Terre Haute.

Cunningham, Mrs. Arthur (Bess), 529 S. Center St. Terre Haute.

Garwood, Mrs. Mildred M., 1606 S. 11th St., Terre Haute.

Gillis, Mr. F. Kenneth, Box 71, Oakland, Ill.

Gillis, Mrs. Letha, Box 71, Oakland, Ill.

Goss, Mrs. Lillian H. 921 S. 5th St., Terre Haute.

Gray, Mrs. Marian, 4951 Dixie Bee Rd., Terre Haute.

Hood, Mrs. A. Rebecca, 107 Barton Ave., Terre Haute.

Hughes, Miss Frances, 126 S. 24th St., Terre Haute.

Humphries, Mrs. Elizabeth M., 2799 American Ave., Sacramento, Calif.

Irwin, Mrs. Glenn, 1728 Ohio St., Terre Haute.

Keller, Mr. & Mrs. Pearl, R.R. 1, Lewis.

Lackey, Mrs. Lela, Marshall, Ill.

Lehner, Mr. Russell W., Brazil.

Lindholm, Mr. A. W., 659½ Wabash Ave., Terre Haute.

Manson, Mrs. Madeline, 1219 N. 6th St., Terre Haute.

Marley, Mr. Floyd E., 1701 S. 10th St., Terre Haute.

Maxey, Mrs. Carl (Helen Keller), 16 Monterey Ave., Terre Haute.

Pratt, Mrs. Katie Dlugos, R.R. 2, Brazil.

Price, Mrs. Evelyn Slade, 2151 Crawford, Terre Haute.

Rector, Ms. Clarice, 2829 Washington Ave., Terre Haute.

Roper, Mrs. Helen, 406 S. 8th, West Terre Haute.

Sebree, Mr. Shubert, 213 N. 13th St., Terre Haute.

Shea, Mr. Gerald J., 1105 Springhill Rd., Terre Haute.

Strong, Mrs. Minnie Kean, Vigo County Home, 3500 Maple Ave., Terre Haute.

Trueb, Ms. Anna Mae, 1103 S. Center, Terre Haute.

Wiedemann, Mrs. Frank E., Terre Haute House, 700 Wabash Ave., Terre Haute.

STAFF FOR FRIENDS OF MAX EHRMANN

Braunschweiger, Otto, Wabash Senior Citizens Center.

Brink, Clarence, Vigo County Public Library.

Clark, Dorothy, Vigo County Historical Museum.

Dewey, Susie, Vigo County School Corporation.

Dowell, Dr. Richard, English Dept., Indiana State University.

Felt, Susan, Terre Haute Area Chamber of Commerce.

Flanagan, Thomas, Vigo County Public Library.

Gudeman, Charles, Indiana Cable Television IC-5.

Hardin, Linda, Vigo County Public Library.

Hawkins, Keith, A-V Center, Indiana State University.

Hazledine, Jane, 164 Allendale Place.

Howard, Edward N., Vigo County Public Library.

Hughes, Frances, 126 S. 24th St.

Irwin, Virginia, 1728 Ohio St.

Jerse, Dorothy, Young Women's Christian Association.

Mitchell, Glen, A-V Center, Indiana State University.

Napier, Victor, B & A Electronics.

Newman, Ann, Vigo County Public Library.

Pauli, Pam, Vigo County Public Library.

Prater, Earl, Scottish Rite Cathedral.

Tackett, Catherine, Swope Art Gallery.

Tucker, Ralph, Terre Haute Area Chamber of Commerce.

Vaughn, Gene, Woodburn Printing.

Walker, Katie, Community Theatre of Terre Haute.

West, Max, A-V Center, Indiana State University.

Wright, Vera, Vigo County School Corporation.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT TO THE VIGO COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD

June 19, 1972

B. MAX EHRMANN CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

During the recent visit to VCPL by Mr. Robert Bell, copyright holder of "Desiderata" and other works by Max Ehrmann, the possibility was discussed of having a Max Ehrmann Centennial Celebration on September 26, the 100th anniversary of his birth. Mr. Fred Werner, producer of the "Desiderata" recording by Les Crane, has since indicated his willingness to participate in a centennial.

Mr. Ralph Tucker, Executive Vice-President of the Terre Haute Area Chamber of Commerce, has offered the services of the Chamber in promotion and coordination of this event.

CENTENNIAL PUBLICATIONS

- MAX EHRMANN, 1872-1945. Brochure, Vigo County Public Library, single fold.
- MAX EHRMANN BIBLIOGRAPHY. Vigo County Public Library, 2 p.
- THE MAX EHRMANN TOUR. Annotated route and map, Vigo County Historical Museum, single sheet.
- MAX EHRMANN CENTENNIAL CONCERT. Program and ticket for Concert at Scottish Rite Cathedral, September 23.
- THE MYTH OF DESIDERATA. Printed text of speech by Robert Bell at Max Ehrmann Centennial Concert, September 23, 3 p.
- MAX EHRMANN CENTENNIAL SLIDES (title list). Vigo County Public Library, 2 p.
- SCRIPT FOR MAX EHRMANN CENTENNIAL SLIDES. By Dorothy Clark, Vigo County Historical Museum, 9 p.
- MEDIOGRAPHY OF INFORMATION ON MAX EHRMANN. Vigo County Public Library, 8 p.
- MAX EHRMANN, CLASS OF 1894. Contents of document cases #20-27, Ehrmann archives at DePauw University, 21 p.
- MAX EHRMANN: A CENTENNIAL TRIBUTE. By Richard W. Dowell, published by the Ehrmann Centennial Committee, 16 p. Available at Vigo County Historical Museum, 1411 S. 6th St., 50¢ at the Museum, \$1.00 by mail.
- Original items by Max Ehrmann, published by Indiana Publishing Co., Terre Haute (printed around 1927), found in an attic by Mr. Charles Hord Ray in September, 1972, and donated to the Historical Museum. Available at the Museum, 10¢ each. Mail orders accepted only for set of three, 50¢.

DESIDERATA (postcard size)
PAUL DRESSER: A SKETCH (small booklet)
FUNERAL TRIBUTE (postcard)

Max Ehrmann poems, reprints on poster board by the Ehrmann Centennial Committee. Available at the Historical Museum, 25¢ each or \$1.50 for the set of six. Mail orders accepted for set only, \$2.50.

DESIDERATA (10'x 13½")
DESIDERATA (8" x 10")
HAPPINESS (8½" x 10")
LOVE SOME ONE (10" x 12")
A PRAYER (10" x 12")
TERRE HAUTE (10" x 12")

to be pub in Pride city may in edited

Max Ehrmann, a native Terre Hautean, was born September 26, 1872, and died September 9, 1945. He was a playwright, lawyer, philosopher and poet.

What has brought acclaim to Max Ehrmann is "Desiderata." Literally, it is not a poem, but an inspirational statement, an expression of personal philosophy, a creed or set of principles to live by. The word "desiderata" means "those things most needed or to be desired." It comes from the Latin, "desideratum," and its first known use in English writing appeared in this sentence in 1652: "All desiderata shall be supplied."

How "Desiderata" came to be known throughout much of the world today is a fascinating story in itself. In the late 50's, the rector of Old St. Paul's Church in Baltimore, Md., compiled a small booklet of inspirational poems and included "Desiderata," with a credit line to Max Ehrmann. The appeal of "Desiderata" was so great that it was copied and used by the church members in a variety of ways -- and the credit line got left off. "Desiderata" multiplied and spread to faraway places, and in so doing acquired a different kind of credit line: "Found in Old St. Paul's Church. Dated 1692." (1692 is the year that the church was established)

The death of Adlai Stevenson in 1965 put "Desiderata" in the mass media. Stevenson had planned to send the poem as a Christmas greeting that year, so it was publicized after his death as a tribute to him -- and credited to a gravestone at Old St. Paul's Church:

The misunderstanding still persists. An advertisement in this month's issue of Psychology Today magazine offers for sale parchment scrolls of "Desiderata" with the wording "Found in Old St. Paul's Church. Dated 1692."

"Desiderata" has been printed, written by hand, quoted in letters, scrolled, and published in newspapers and magazines countless times. Newsweek magazine, for example, printed the "Desiderata" in a December, 1966, issue with the credit line "Max Ehrmann, a Midwest poet of the 1920's."

One of the most interesting developments occurred in San Diego, Calif., on September 20, 1968, when columnist John Sinor told his readers in the San Diego Evening Tribune how a friend had helped him in a time of gloom and discouragement by sending a scrap of paper on which this was written:

"Be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars. You have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should. Desiderata."

There was considerable readership response and many different opinions. Some did attribute it to Max Ehrmann, as reported in a subsequent column on September 27. Sinor wrote, "But who is Max Ehrmann? I still haven't been able to find out."

Then one of his readers found a brief biography of Ehrmann in a 1938 dictionary of contemporary poets in the Oceanside Public Library, which gave his address as Terre Haute, Ind. Sinor promptly phoned the Vigo County Public Library, where he got a complete rundown on Max Ehrmann from reference librarian Evelyn LaBier. This was duly reported in his final column of the three-part Ehrmann series on October 2, 1968.

"Desiderata" was catapulted into fame in September last year when a 45 rpm single record was released on a Warner Bros. label and jumped to the Top Ten charts nationally. Narration is by Les Crane, a well-known dj on the west coast (and host of ABC's first late-night talk show in 1964). Music is by Fred Werner, one of the top music men on the contemporary scene. Their production company, not too surprisingly, is named "Old St. Paul Productions."

Soon after, along with nine other songs that complement or interpret, "Desiderata" was released as an LP record, available also in cassette tape format.

Then early this year a songbook containing words and music from the LP record was published by Screen Gems, a division of Columbia Pictures.

The high point in the success of "Desiderata" was reached on March 14 at the 14th Annual Grammy Awards in New York City, when it was chosen as the "Best Spoken Word Recording."

Writings by Ehrmann that have been published in book format include Breaking Home Ties. The Poems of Max Ehrmann (c. 1906; c. 1910), Wife of Marobus and Other Plays, Fearsome Riddle, Jesus: A Passion Play. Farrago, and Mystery of Madeline LeBlanc. None of these is in print today, but Crescendo Publishing Co., Boston, Mass., in 1966 published a volume titled Poems of Max Ehrmann. This is still available from Crescendo, 48 Melrose St., for \$4.50. Crescendo's owner, Mr. Robert L. Bell, now owns the copyright to Desiderata and the other Property of the poems.

Among many poems is one titled "Terre Haute." Here is the last of the six stanzas:

"What various aspirations man pursues!
It matters not what visions lure,
Here may ambition all its talent use;
Here is the world in miniature."

ENH 19 June 72 Terre Haute pays tribute this month to one of its own, Max Ehrmann, author of the world-famous Desiderata.

community Attains. File A lawyer, playwright, philosopher and poet, Max Ehrmann was born in Terre Haute September 26, 1872, and died in this city that he loved on September 9, 1945. A Max Ehrmann Centennial Celebration is being held September 22 and 23.

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Good Housekeeping magazine published

Desiderata in December, 1971, and credited

it as "Found in Old Saint Paul's Church,

Baltimore, 1692." In a subsequent apology

the editors added this comment:

"We are glad to set the record straight about rights to this first-rate essay; one that fits the mores of our day as perceptively as it no doubt would have done had it first been published in 1692."

A detailed and accurate report on the Desiderata controversy appeared in the February 19, 1972, issue of Canadian Magazine under the heading "You Asked Us About the Origin of Desiderata" in response to a letter from a reader in Calgary. "Many still make the pilgrimage to St. Paul's expecting to see the poem inscribed there in aged stone," the report states.

One of the many interesting stories about Desiderata began in San Diego, Cal., on September 29, 1968, when columnist John Sinor told his readers in the San Diego Evening Tribune how a friend had helped him in a time of discouragement by sending a scrap of paper on which this was written:

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Then one of his readers found a brief biography of Ehrmann in a 1938 dictionary of contemporary poets that gave his address as Terre Haute. Sinor followed the lead with a phone call to the Vigo County Public Library where he got a complete rundown on Max Ehrmann, which he reported to his readers in the final installment of the three-part Ehrmann series on October 2, 1968.

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At the 14th Annual Grammy Awards in New York City on March 14, Desiderata was chosen as the "Best Spoken Word Recording." None of the twenty-two books by Max
Ehrmann is in print today, but a condensed edition of the <u>Poems of Max Ehrmann</u>
was published by Crescendo Publishing Co.
in 1966. Copies are available in local
bookstores or can be ordered from Crescendo,
48 Melrose St., Boston, Mass., for \$4.50.
Crescendo's owner, Mr. Robert L. Bell, now
holds the copyright to Desiderata and
the other poems.

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It matters not what visions lure,

Here may ambition all its talent use;

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--Edward N. Howard, Director
Vigo County Public Library

THRRE HAUTE

What place is lovelier than Terre Haute: The foliage of her many trees, That trembles as the cooling breezes float Across the grain fields' yellow seas!

The gentle river that caressing sings Past shop and mill and waving corn, Each day some happy inspiration brings; Each day a thousand hopes are born.

Here workers wend their way to pleasant homes; And students spend romantic days. Here lofty spires and gilded domes Reach up to touch the sun's last rays.

Here many a youth and maid their faith have kept, Labored, lived happily, grown gray. Here bolder ones with keener eyes have crept To paths where fame and fortune lay.

Vast growing fields and treasures in the ground, Art, learning, too, here find abode; And many a forward-looking son has found The gifts the gods have here bestowed.

What various aspirations man pursues: It matters not what visions lure, Here may ambition all its talents use; Here is the world in miniature.

This poem dedicated to city of Terre Haute, Jan.1,1922, by Kiwanian Max Ehrmann, and placed here(Library) by the courtesy of the Terre Haute Kiwania Club.

Max Ehrmann born Sept. 26, 1872; died Sept. 9, 1945

"To Max Ehrmann his birthdays were always serious occasions, for memories, for looking freshly at life, for making new plans."

Most famous of his writings are "The Prayer" and "Desiderata."

Dorothy J. Clark

TERRE HAUTE'S

ACTIVITIES and

TERRE HAUTE AREA
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



CEN CHELLEY STILLEY
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CALCANS (CARA)

7/72

EHRMANN CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION TAKING SHAPE

One Hundred years ago on September 26, Terre Haute's Max Ehrmann was born. In commemoration of this remarkable man, who has gained recently further national prominence with the Les Crane recording of Ehrmann's inspirational message, "Desiderata," a special task force of the Chamber's Recreation and Tourism committee is spearheading plans for a Centennial Celebration tentatively planned for September 22 and 23.

Task Force members Gene Vaughn, chairman; Dr. Richard Dowell, ISU English Department; Dorothy Clark, Vigo County Historical Museum; Dorothy Jerse, YWCA staff; Catherine Tackett, Swope Art Gallery; Ed Howard, Vigo County Public Library; Ralph Tucker, C of C; Susan Felt, C of C have requested, that anyone knowing the location of an Ehrmann relative contact Dorothy Clark who, along with Catherine Tackett, is coordinating programs for the relatives' involvement in the Centennial activities.

Dowell, who was co-coordina tor of the Theodore Dreiser Centennial, has provided valuable,
suggestions and information to the
committee. He would also like to
compile a small centennial pamphlet on Ehrmann's life and his
many achievements. This would, along with every Centennial event,
emphasize that the writer of "Desiderata" was Max Ehrmann, a native
of Terre Haute.

No more will people think the author of "Desiderata" is anonymous and that the words which have inspired men from Adlai Stevenson, to young people across the nation were not found in Old St. Paul's Church; but were rather found in the mind of a man who loved his town - Max Ehrmann of Terre Haute.

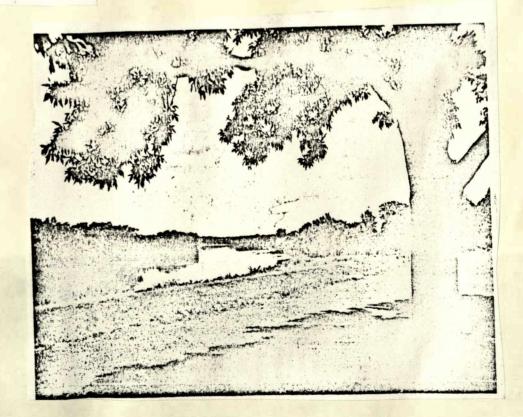
DO NOTE CIRCULATE

FROM THE JOURNAL OF MAX EHRMANN:

and and the first to be be believed by an in the course to

December 2, 1932

This afternoon I
went down to the river
and again bathed my
soul in the dirty, sacred
waters of the Wabash.
I have skated on it and
bathed and fished in it.
More than fifty years I
have loved it.



Activities and Comments 6/13/72 FIFTY YEARS AGO TODAY - July 4, 1922 . . .

Max Ehrmann, Terre Haute's own poet, scholar and philosopher, wrote in his daily journal the following excerpt:

July 4 -- Not often in man's history has the body been so well fed and the spiritual life so under-nourished. But human nature demands more than external embellishment. In our blind optimism we think we are headed toward a new Eternal City; but it may be we are already on our via dolorosa headed not toward Calvary, but Gehenna. It is the fourth of July, and children are shooting fireworks. But beneath the ground there is rumbling not made with toy pistols.

(Later) -- This is my country. Is it because I am growing older that I so often see the future through smoked glasses? It is sad to think that even my lattle endeavor to do well by my fellowmen might be swallowed up in a great catastrophe.

(At this time the nation's coal miners and railroaders, numbering into the millions, were on a strike; and there was almost daily violence.)

MEFERENCE LAT

Aug. 1922 - FIFTY YEARS AGO From the Journal of Max Ehrmann

August 27. -- Thinking of the years since the war, I marvel that the world has recovered any of its cheer, that men and women can laugh and dare to be happy. But the human spirit is resilient and memory covers the past with the mist of forgiveness. The great universe is still going about its business, tomorrow there may be sunshine and time wrecks all things, even the ache in the heart. Surely it is better to have walked, if only for a little while, this earth-way, with all its heavy hours, then never to have lived at all. To have loved someone, to have dreamed, to have had hours of ecstasy under the stars, these are worth the price that life exacts.

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MAX EHRMANN

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PLANS FOR EHRYAIN CENTENNIAL ATTRACTS STATE PUBLICITY

Activity is mounting as the Max Ehrmann Centennial date approaches. Committee members are meeting weekly at the Vigo County Historical Museum to coordinate all the events being planned in conjunction with the September 22 and 23 celebration.

The Centennial has already received widespread coverage due to the recent fame Ehrmann has been given as the author of the inspirational poem, DESIDERATA, which was set to music and recorded by Les Crane last fall. The recording was not only ranked number one on the charts throughout the nation, but also won a Grammy for the best spoken recording of the year.

In the July 23 issue of the Indiana polis Star Sunday magazine, Star reporter
Fred Cafinder wrote a two-page article
entitled, "Max Ehrmann: Flower Child A
Century Too Early." He stated that Ehrmann's views on the war and his philoso phy of life echo the familiar chants of
today's youth.

The twelve-member Centennial steer ing committee is working hard to give Terre Haute's universally known and well regarded son his proper credit and celebration.

Max Ehrmann Centennial steering committee chairman, GENE VAUGHN, is heading the organization for the event.

Committee members chairing special divisions are: DR. RICHARD DOWELL, MRS. DOROTHY JERSE. MRS. DOROTHY CLARK, ANN NEWMAN, MRS. SUSIE DEWEY, MRS. VIRGINIA IRWIN, MRS. CATHERINE TACKETT, ED HOW-ARD and VERA WRIGHT.

Executive Vice President, RALPH TUCKER and his administrative assistant, SUSAN FELT will coordinate these events with VAUGHN.